

***Draft* MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF MILPITAS**

Minutes of:	Special Joint Meeting of the Milpitas City Council and Planning Commission
Date:	Tuesday, October 6, 2015
Time:	5:30 PM
Location:	Milpitas City Hall Committee Room 455 E. Calaveras Blvd.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Esteves called the joint meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

ROLL CALL

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Esteves, Councilmembers Barbadillo, Giordano and Grilli

PLANNING COMMISSION: Chair Mandal, Commissioners Ciardella, Lien, Madnawat, Maglalang, Sandhu and Alternate Member Mohsin

ABSENT: Vice Mayor Montano, Commissioner Morris

Staff present included City Manager Tom Williams, City Attorney Chris Diaz, City Clerk Mary Lavelle, Planning Director Bill Ekern and Economic Development Manager Edesa Bitbadal

**PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Esteves led all in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Esteves welcomed all the Planning Commissioners to this joint meeting. Planning Commission Chair Sudhir Mandal offered his thanks to the Mayor, who took up the offer and idea to meet together, which came from the entire group of Commissioners.

Public Forum speakers:

Rob Means, Milpitas resident, announced a conference in spring of next year 2016 on podcars.

Cary Matsuoka, Superintendent of Milpitas Unified School District, stated that as the City prepared to begin the process of creating a new General Plan, schools wanted to be involved. Where schools locate was very important.

Councilmember Giordano suggested on timing for the agenda that maybe the group should plan to spend ten minutes per item on the agenda, so as to finish prior to 7:00 PM, when the City Council needed to move upstairs for its regular meeting.

Understanding Council Priorities

Mayor Esteves reported that priorities have been approved by City Council, especially the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which was a priority and should be implemented in that year. In terms of development, the focus was on housing in the Transit Area Specific Plan (TASP) and the MidTown Specific Plan areas.

City Manager Tom Williams announced that the core City services of public safety, traffic, parks and open space, and maintenance of infrastructure were critical. Land use decisions by the Planning Commission must take into account the jobs /housing balance as most important right now. The City enjoyed a 1.9 jobs to population ratio at this time. Business attraction and retention were key. A water augmentation program and maintaining affordable water rates were critical. Integrity of ordinances and the processes of the City Council were important and a top priority.

Councilmember Giordano agreed the jobs/housing balance was a key factor. She did not realize that figure was provided to decision makers or did not recall. She felt there was a need for the Council and the Commission to look at the same data and same things when making decisions.

Mayor Esteves said that was why the city hired a new Economic Development Manager. The city did not want to lose job sites and that's why no residential building was allowed in some industrial areas.

Councilmember Grilli was bothered by a recent potential project brought to Council for the Serra Center. That area, if built, would be 80% residential and was not really good for the balance.

Councilmember Barbadillo said it was a good term – jobs / housing balance - as a concept. At Town Center, the Council voted to have no residential there.

Chair Mandal felt that some topics were interrelated, for him.

Commissioner Madnawat felt the jobs/housing balance was a good idea on a macro level. Yet, it was hard to implement for one specific project. "Mixed use" was a concept that the Commission struggled with, when projects were brought before the Commission, so it would be prudent to define. If a site was vacant for a long period, then such definition may not apply.

Mayor Esteves remarked that when the General Plan and Zoning were established, it should not be arbitrarily changed based on the market only. Preserve industrial and commercial zones, he urged.

Councilmember Giordano asked if the Economic Development Manager came to Commission meetings to give presentations and Commissioner Maglalang said no.

Commissioner Sandhu said when the Commission made decisions, the main item considered was the staff reports with facts to consider. He asked to make those as explicit as possible.

Planning Director Mr. Bill Ekern confirmed that every staff report from the Planning Department contained findings to relate to the recommendation for a decision by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Maglalang felt it was hard to implement the General Plan. The City was "client driven" as in a developer/applicant. Fix the General Plan and he recommended putting on the ballot every 6 – 8 years. He mentioned lobbyists hired by developers, too.

The Mayor explained that the General Plan was going to be in process for a major update, the first one since 1994, after lots of review and discussion to be scheduled.

Councilmember Giordano asked about the mixed use ratio. It should be more defined. Mr. Ekern responded that there was no magic number to make a particular project work. She felt it should be a policy, to firmly adhere to. Mr. Ekern said there could be profound economic impacts, and with strict imposition, there must be a strong economic analysis.

Commissioner Madnawat said overall, they talked about the Transit Area Specific Plan with no grocery store and lots of traffic. Mayor Esteves responded the grocery store was coming, as part of the plan.

Economic Development Manager Edessa Bitbadal reported that she worked routinely with Planning Department staff, always including economic development input on all reports to Commissioners. In the future, it could be called out more on the staff reports. She often spoke with interested developers about best use of land and regarding the financial responsibilities of the city.

Commissioner Maglalang wanted to know more specifics of what the Council desired to see built in the City, i.e. for mixed use, in front or back of a property, or other design features.

Chair Mandal said on every large project before the Commission, questions were asked about schools and impact to schools. But then the topic was not taken any further.

Superintendent of Schools Cary Matsuoka replied that for any development proposal, the Milpitas Unified School District received figures from its demographer to learn how many students would be added to the district. Staff would then err on the side of the highest possible estimate. He would commit to getting good information to the City and then MUSD had to turn it into costs of building new facilities.

In terms of the TASP area, Mayor Esteves noted the projection was for 7,000 new homes over the build-out of the area. Not all would occur next year, but over the term of the Plan. The Mayor agreed with the Commission Chair that some projects were far from schools, so there was not a worry about where students would go. Biggest growth right now was in the TASP area (not MidTown).

Councilmember Grilli remarked, that in the TASP, all those students would eventually impact middle schools and high schools. That there was no plan to build new ones was a fact to consider.

Councilmember Giordano asked how much schools should weigh in. A more in-depth analysis would need to be done. Long term impacts needed to be figured out to educate deeper on the impacts of a development project.

Commissioner Madnawat commented that decision makers always needed factual findings to make decisions. Perhaps there was a need to “slow down” as regards development.

Councilmember Giordano asked the Planning Director what other cities did in terms of schools with new projects. He replied: same as Milpitas. By law, all developers must pay school impact fees based on the size of a given project, and impacts got addressed in the EIR or mitigation report. This topic of the developer fees should be on agenda of the City Council, she replied.

Commissioner Lien wanted to know how the City was doing at this time in terms of class size numbers and any over crowding. Mr. Matsuoka responded that capacity was at 98% at most school sites while class sizes were fine, based on staff ratios.

Chair Mandal recalled an update to the General Plan two years ago. For the new update planned, he asked what was the time frame. Mr. Ekern explained the budget for starting the comprehensive General Plan review was on the Council’s agenda this date, and then it would be a three-year process to complete the new document, after many meetings and opportunities for input.

Vision for the Future

Councilmember Giordano reported to Commissioners that the City was in progress completing a new Strategic Plan, as a great tool. The major concern would be traffic, she felt. The whole picture on traffic was most critical for the future.

Mayor Esteves responded that traffic was both local and regional. Some projects were ongoing with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Caltrans as a result.

A local shuttle bus was good idea, Mr. Madnawat agreed with the Mayor and it should start soon, i.e. do not wait until BART station opens.

Chair Mandal said the TASP and MidTown plans were not producing results of seeing people walking, biking and using transit. In fact, there were more cars and traffic with all the new housing.

Councilmember Giordano asked Commissioners if they felt they were weighing in on the future vision of the City. She wanted to hear more from them as to weighing in stronger on the vision of the City and maybe more meetings to do that were needed.

Chair Mandal said, yes, have more of these joint meetings, as needed. He wanted to hear from Council and to share remarks. He reported that staff reports from Planning Department were excellent and that Commissioners needed to ask more questions.

Mayor Esteves mentioned other topics including: executive homes on Barber Lane, the Pacific Mall, keeping roads up with a high Pavement Condition Index, a clean city, a diverse community and other elements form the vision for a good quality of life in Milpitas.

Commissioner Sandhu said the City needed more opportunity for new churches or temples or gurdwara. Mayor Esteves replied with comments about appropriately zoned land throughout the City.

Roles in Implementation of Strategic Vision

City Manager Williams reported that staff and City Council would work closely with the Planning Commission as the Strategic Plan was implemented.

Mayor Esteves asked if the Commissioners had any comments on their roles.

Chair Mandal felt as a group, they were doing really well with really good staff reports. He wanted to open the horizon a little bit. Provide the idea on what the City Council's vision was and where city was going. He knew it was good to hear that the General Plan was going to be updated with their input.

Commissioner Madnawat reported that the new Planning Director was very good about asking if Commissioners had questions before the meetings began. He always tried to learn more.

Councilmember Barbadillo confirmed the Planning Commission Chair's thoughts on the staff reports on which decisions shall be based. More data would help decision makers, with pros/cons, as he had asked for from City staff. Being objective along with integrity on all decision making was important.

Commission Alternate Member Mohsin reported she was happy to participate in the joint session. The biggest issue to her was traffic and there was a need for transit within the City.

Mayor Esteves invited comments from the audience. Mr. Tom Valore wanted to know how various plans mentioned inter-related and how they were followed.

Finally, the Mayor thanked all for their presence at this joint meeting, especially Commissioners whom he thanked for their input and important work on land use decision making.

The joint meeting-study session was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

*Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by
Mary Lavelle, City Clerk*